

# Connally, Bush could vie for V-P

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WASHINGTON — Consideration of an "open convention" for selection of a running mate for President Ford raised today the possibility of a contest between John B. Connally and CIA director George Bush for the second spot on the Republican ticket.

House Minority Leader John Rhodes broached the idea Wednesday in an interview with the Washington Post.

Rhodes, who will be permanent chairman of the Republican convention in Kansas City next month, told the Post it was "highly possible" Ford will let

"Jimmy Carter is just  
southern fried George McGovern."  
Connally interview on Page 4-A.

delegates choose his running mate if he wins the presidential nomination.

He said Bush will rank along with Connally and Ronald Reagan as convention favorites if the "open" route is followed.

Reagan has said he would not accept the vice presidency but, under circumstances of delegates choosing the running mate free of direction from the presidential nominee, he, too, would be subject to a draft unless he removed himself from consideration.

This is the first time Bush, former Texas congressman and former Republican National Committee chairman, has been mentioned as a possibility for vice president.

Senate objections to a politician in the sensitive CIA post forced President Ford last year to eliminate Bush from consideration for vice president if he were confirmed as CIA director.

Rhodes said a Bush draft by delegates in an open convention would be the only way he could gain a place on the ticket without violating the President's promise.

Bush failed today to return a phone

call, but a friend said he commented on reading the Post story, "It's not my problem, it's the President's."

The former Houston congressman, son of the late U.S. Sen. Prescott Bush of Connecticut, was believed to be the runner-up in Ford's consideration for vice president when he gave the position to Nelson Rockefeller in 1974.

Post political writer David Broder said Rhodes "went out of his way" to praise Bush. Rhodes was quoted as saying "I think George Bush would bring as much to the ticket as John Connally. Those are very articulate and capable men."

Abiding by assurance to senators who approved his nomination as CIA director last December, Bush has remained removed from Republican party politics since returning from Peking, China, where he was chief U.S. liaison officer.

He was in Plains, Ga., earlier this week briefing Democratic presidential nominee Jimmy Carter on foreign affairs, at President Ford's direction.

Connally, who endorsed Ford's candidacy Tuesday after maintaining a

neutral position in the presidential contest, is widely considered to be the frontrunner as Ford's choice for the vice presidential nomination.

He also received majority votes as the choice of delegates to the Republican convention in recent polls made by United Press International and Associated Press.

Rhodes' remarks followed a half-hour conference with Ford at the White House earlier in the day. He told reporters immediately after the conference that the list of potential running mates was "large and growing" but he refused to name persons on the President's list.

In other developments concerning Connally's vice-presidential chances:

- The Los Angeles Times today reported that the once-rigid opposition within President Ford's inner circle to a Connally candidacy has greatly diminished. The Times reported that one campaign official, a longtime Connally admirer, said campaign chairman Rogers C. B. Morton, former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, and deputy campaign director Stuart Spencer "have turned completely around on Connally" in recent weeks.

- Sen. William Brock, R-Tenn., said that Connally is "probably the most effective single candidate in the United States — bar none." Brock, a Ford supporter, said Connally could overcome any stigma of Watergate.

- Brock's colleague, Sen. Howard H. Baker, however, said that Ford will have to consider whether Connally is sufficiently "free of controversy" as a result of milk fund charges, of which he was acquitted. Baker, considered a vice-presidential possibility himself, urged Ford to choose a running mate from the "Sunbelt." He said the area "has sort of been neglected in the Republican party — forever."